

THEATRE

A REFLEX OF THE DRAMATIC EVENTS OF THE WEEK.

NEW SERIES: Volume XII.
Whole No. 291.

NEW YORK: SATURDAY, JULY 26, 1884.

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NEWTON BEERS.

My Friend Brown, the Critic.

My friend Brown—I call him young Brown, because he is younger than most of his fellow-critics—was born with an unfortunate desire to express ideas. So long as a man confines himself nowadays to comfortable saws and assured traditions, so long as he is content to say what others say and think as others think, he is apt to sail gracefully in his small ship. Otherwise he is bound to receive occasional shocks. Young Brown has been, in his time, a somewhat ambitious versifier and a critic of the drama. He loved the poets and he loved the stage, and so he drifted almost unconsciously on two lines, neither of which, it seems to me, can possibly meet the other. In France and in various countries where art is close to the heart, poets have often been dramatic critics—writers, that is to say, on the aesthetics of the stage. But in our own country dramatic critics are practical journalists. Now, Brown was not anxious to be a journalist, in any strict sense of the word. He took up journalism, as it were, to discover the aesthetic side of it. That was before the sunflower time of Oscar Wilde, before aestheticism had lost its fine meaning in the popular understanding. There is no better word than aesthetics. Aesthetics are the explanation and illumination of genius. To understand the greatest art in a deep and true way is certainly a task that any nature can afford to set to itself. Goethe, Emerson and Matthew Arnold are aesthetes. But there are aesthetes and aesthetes. My friend Brown had studied in the sunlight of the masters.

In fact, my friend Brown had dreamed of art. He had absorbed Tintoretto and Raphael, grown pallid in sweet moonshine over the grave of Héloïse and Abelard, pondered passionately under the willow-tree that weeps on the tomb of Alfred de Musset, read with delight and fervor the glowing pages of the Greeks, and sat up through long melancholy nights with Corneille, Racine and the divine Shakespeare. Young Brown was, therefore, an impressionable enthusiast. The wreck of this tough world was not strong enough for him in his adolescence. He had a sublime confidence in himself. He started from Olympian Heights—and tumbled into Mackereville.

He was conceited, without doubt. Most men, that desire to teach and reform people, are conceited. But that pardonable fault was soon driven out of him. It did not take him long to learn that nectar is not squeezed from sand.

After having studied, thought and theorized for awhile, Brown came to New York. He wanted to put himself to a test. He wanted to do something. He began to write poems, essays, stories, anything that came to his hand. But his spare hours were spent in the theatre. There was an exquisite glamor about the theatre that fascinated him. The action of a drama—rapid, striking, full of adventure, life and color—enchanted his imagination. He found the men and women of the stage ideal. His conscience and his fancy invested them with a lovely purity. The scenes of a play were profoundly real to him. He was so much of a fanatic that he confounded the Black Crook—opulent and sensual magnificence—with some beautiful poetic existence. He was simply lost, for a brief and delicious period, in the ecstasy of youth. He was forced to utter his heart in his poems—though it is a painful duty to record that the poems were invariably bad.

Brown was awakened suddenly and unpleasantly from his romance. Even poets must pay for what they eat and drink, and my friend was no anchorite. In a rush of courage, after having pondered continuously on the matter, he made up his mind that he ought to force his path in journalism. "I can at least express myself in a newspaper," he said, "and perhaps I can do some good to art." He attached himself to an evening paper, and was immediately requested to write picturesque and graphic accounts of fires, not to speak of other impressive local events. Somehow, perhaps on the homoeopathic principle of medicine, writing about "conflagrations" seemed to chill the flame within his soul. He discovered speedily that journalism is hard work, back-work, the least imaginative work under the sun. However, he was asked one day to prepare an important dramatic criticism for the New York Herald. This was balm to his spirit. He had seen great actors, read great dramas, formed exact opinions as to what the stage ought to be. He wrote several articles on players and plays for the Herald. Finally, and unexpectedly, he was invited to be the dramatic critic for the New York Times.

My ingenious friend, after he had written for the Times six months, became thoroughly impressed with the fact that he was a monstrous encumbrance on the face of the earth. He had gone at his business in a recklessly candid, unselfish way. He was ready, eager indeed, to set down his convictions. He was determined to see in the American stage a world of art where vulgar intruders had attempted to establish something that was not art. He was rather high-toned and emphatic, perhaps. But seriousness and sincerity belonged to him quite as truly as good breeding belongs to a gentleman. He put these things into his work. He looked upon the stage with the utmost sympathy. But, as he wrote, his misconceptions vanished. He found that the theatre is a place where, frequently, incompetency and vulgarity like to exhibit themselves. He found that the

people—the great, free, intelligent people—admired what men of taste and sense abhor. Talent, he observed, was crowded from the stage by stupidity. Good actors were far between. Good plays were as rare as the visits of angels. There was demoralization, decadence, lack of high spirit and earnestness on all sides. He said so. He was looked upon and called for saying so. The head of poor Brown dropped out of Heaven.

What made the matter worse was this, actors and managers and others interested in speculative enterprises were not the persons that alone attacked and harassed our critic of the Times; his fellow-writers were bent, apparently, upon steering his path with thorns. They snarled, and growled, and bit—when they could. As time went on, Brown got used to the fashions of journalism. He was soon thick-skinned like the others. He let them have their say, though he wondered what aimed them. Yet, at last, he was disgusted, and he was often willing to give up the labor that he had taken in hand with honest respect for it and with a belief that he might help men to respect it.

My friend Brown was, I mean, disenchanted. The rose-colors of youth had but melted into the paste-fumes of the theatre. He saw facts instead of illusions. The footlights were glamorous.

Yet he had not lost courage, and he proceeded to adjust himself to new conditions. He continued to write serenely from his own point of view. He persisted in measuring stage-accomplishment by its artistic value, not by its value as a financial investment. He was called repeatedly cynical, unappreciative, unsympathetic. Actors and authors and managers, he knew, cared little for criticism. Or, to be more discriminating, they were angered when they were criticised. They asked for the bread of flattery, and Brown gave them the stones of judgment. It is conceivable that he was not popular among them, though I suggest that he was a better friend to them than they were willing to admit. Criticism is only criticism when it points out the comparative worth of things—the worth of one play compared with an infinitely sounder and finer play, the worth of one actor compared with an infinitely more gifted, more intelligent actor. Criticism that is written to assist speculative projects, or to soothe the emotions of actors and managers who consider themselves beyond criticism, is evidently ridiculous and indecent. Yet those who have had opportunities to observe the tone of the press toward the stage, and who have marked the feeling of the stage toward the press, know that the press and the stage give the least possible aid to each other. Those who write with artistic spirit about the stage—and I am acquainted with a few that write in such a spirit—admit mournfully that their thought is wasted. And the actors and authors—I have said that they do not want to be criticised. This is their weakness. They should want to be criticised. Art is a continuous learning, and one does not learn merely by looking into himself. It has been said that the most effective suggestions have come to strong men from their enemies; for your enemy usually finds the weak spot in your armor.

Newspapers—especially American newspapers—do not take the dramatic critic seriously. Our newspapers are filled with theatrical gabble; the average critic is a gossip, and not the best sort of gossip either. When he is really a critic it is almost inevitably because he has individuality and has made up his mind to show it. I have no doubt that, if there were a vigorous and honest demand for good dramatic criticism in the newspapers; if the actors and the managers and the public demanded it, the newspapers would scramble hotly for little Lambs and Hazlitts.

I had almost forgotten my friend Brown. His pains were not absolutely thrown away. Some liked him and some disliked him; some praised him and some abused him. He was well pleased to excite the abuse of certain persons, whom it would not be an exaggeration to call knaves and charlatans. He received, in the main, cordial appreciation and encouragement from many actors, authors and strangers. He convinced even enemies that he was a friend of the stage. He did not, I fancy, overestimate his own ability and strength. He was anxious in a simple way to do his part in what he considered an important work. But he was only permitted to do it against obstacles, and that, with him, was the rub.

His chief compensation, after all, was indirect. While he wrote for the Times—and he was connected with that paper six years and longer—he had the good fortune to study and describe the acting of several famous players—players like Modjeska, Clara Morris, Mary Anderson, Sara Bernhardt, Salvini, Booth, McCullough, Barrett, Haase, Barnay, Rossi, to mention the names of only a few. He was permitted to assist dramatists of talent, honorable and generous managers, young and bright actors. He threw the influence of his paper on the side of what was best fitted to interest and exalt public intelligence. Was my friend Brown, then, altogether useless?

After having served his paper loyally for so many years, the paper turned against poor Brown. That was not extraordinary. He should have been on the lookout for a journalistic *ogre*. Mr. Henry Irving was then in this country. He was about to demolish us with his colossal genius. Brown had never

seen Irving, and was, therefore, clean-browed on this vexatious subject. A few days before Irving appeared, our dramatic critic was asked by his editor to let another and less experienced writer prepare the Times' articles on Irving. Brown offered to resign. The resignation was not accepted, and he retained his connection with the paper. He was determined, however, to discover, if possible, why he had not been allowed to criticize Irving's acting. No reason for the injustice and impertinence shown to him was offered by the paper. It was Mr. Joseph Hatton who, best of all, vouchsafed a reason. Mr. Hatton is the author of "Irving's Impressions of America." That is the best and worst thing I can say of him. Hatton declared, when Brown accused him of false friendship, that George Jones—who may have been imposed upon by tricksters—regarded Brown as a person too prejudiced against Mr. Irving to write upon his acting. Brown, with cheerful promptness, repeated Hatton's statement to Mr. Jones, who asserted that Hatton had not spoken the truth. The question of veracity lay, therefore, between George Jones and Joseph Hatton, and it may lie between them till doomsday. Hatton had always pretended that he was an excellent friend of Brown's. When the latter wrote his impressions of Irving's acting, over his own name, in the Times, the small tail to Mr. Irving's kite wagged itself vigorously in an anonymous article contributed to the Liverpool Post. In this article Hatton describes Brown as a ridiculous writer, as the enemy of good actors, as a ten-cent poet, and applied various deadly epithets to him. Brown took up the gauntlet and had his say about the "Irving clique"—it has been called appropriately the champagne and chicken clique—in the London Standard. Hatton then collapsed into quietude. He had gone too far, I imagine, in his Jeems-like devotion to his impercable ideal, Irving. How well or ill he was justified in denouncing my friend Brown as a villainous hater of Irving may be discovered in the following extract from Brown's first article on Irving in the Times: "Mr. Irving appears to have independent thought and not much mimetic power. He thinks out a character. But the character is inevitably an exhibition of one man. Mimetic power, of course, does not belong to every great actor. Salvini has little of it, Jefferson has less, Booth has some, McCullough has none. Actors like Rossi, Barnay, Haase and Coquelin are essentially mimetic actors. But all these actors have what Mr. Irving seems to lack—genuine dramatic feeling. They express life, not merely themselves. Mr. Irving is devoted to the business of expressing himself. Fortunately, we are interested in the man. We watch with sympathy his efforts to accomplish certain effects, his almost painful desire to avoid commonplaces, his peculiar talent for turning all his surroundings into an illusion which helps his own acting. . . . Mr. Irving is not a great actor and cannot be a tragic actor. He has not the dash, the grace, the ease nor the fire for a great melodramatic actor. He has, however, a strange and imaginative flare for the salient, startling, odd, abnormal side of character. He is to some degree what is called technically a character actor. He is distinctively also a pictorial actor. It is not hard to understand that his singular talent, his imaginative faculty, and his intellectual subtlety should make an unusual effect in characters like Mathias, Eugene Aram, Louis XI, and Iago."

Is that abuse? Should words like these have called down Hatton's thunder on the head of Brown? Luckily—and in spite of what science may say to the contrary—there is a kind of thunder that is not preceded by lightning.

Brown resigned from the Times two months ago. I congratulated him when he shook the dust from his feet and gave up dramatic criticism as a profession for the rest of his normal life. In some moment of lunacy he may go back to it. I don't think he will so long as he holds his senses. He wants me to assure the two or three hundred writers for newspapers, who have explained the two or three hundred reasons that led him to resign, that they are all very acute persons. He is satisfied if they are. But, in justice to poor Mr. Hatton, he begs me to add that the voluminous and philosophical author of Irving's impressions had nothing to do with his retirement. Hatton was independently idiotic. Why not interview George Jones?

GEORGE EDGAR MONTGOMERY.

Agent Called Back.

It has been decided that the Madison Square stage is too small to give a proper representation to Called Back. At least this is the reason given by Daniel Frohman for its transfer to the Fifth Avenue, where it will be produced on Sept. 1, and is expected to run eight weeks. Boucicault thinks it is too full of tears and we to be a great success here. The Madison Square Called Back is a dramatization by the authors of the novel. Thomas H. Gieny has also culled a Called Back from the book. And there are said to be a few others who have dramatizations. Daniel Frohman delivers this opinion on Called Back generally and his own Called Back particularly.

"We have copyrighted the name and paid for the play. The authors of the novel dramatized it. We can easily detect plagiarism. We will take legal measures to restrain infringers. Mantell is called back from the

other side, and Balasso is on his way home. The models of the play are in the hands of scenic artists. We think it will prove to be a second Silver King—at least, we are prepared to equip another company."

Professional Doings.

—Lida Talbot goes with John T. Raymond.
—Manager Tennessee left for Cincinnati yesterday.
—John A. Lane will return to John McCullough's company.
—Ella Caldwell has been engaged by the Bijou management.
—Dion Boucicault went to Manhattan Beach on Monday morning.
—Philip Goucher is painting scenery for Called Back and Twins.
—Politics and shattering risks have killed Summer theatricals in Maine.
—Emily Rig's health does not permit her to travel the coming season.
—C. P. Flockton has been engaged by the Madison Square management.
—Harley Merry is engaged on the scenery for the New Standard Theatre.
—The next Sunday Concert at the Casino will be the third without solists.
—Geo. Prou has purchased an eccentric comedy from a Canadian author.
—Max Rosenberg has gone to the Catskills for the remainder of the summer.
—Manager Gray, of Memphis, is in town. He will remain about three weeks.
—M. B. Leavitt will take out an Orpheus and Eurydice company—probably.
—New scenery is being prepared for Minnie Madden's opening at the New Park.
—The present is the last week of Blanche Corelli's season at the Cosmopolitan.
—J. R. Rosenquest has returned to his duties at the Fourteenth Street Theatre.
—W. S. Rising has been engaged as leading tenor of Carleton's English Opera company.
—Lester Wallace entertained Reginald Martin and a party of friends at dinner on Friday.
—Investigation is the title of Edward Harrigan's new play to open the Comique season.
—Well-Fed Dora has started on the road again. It opened in Rochester on Monday night.
—Brooks and Dickson are engaging the cast of The Seven Ravens for a certainty of twenty weeks.
—Kate Castleton admits to being twenty-nine years of age. The remaining ten is easily added.

—The Broadway entrance of the Fifth Avenue Theatre is being redecorated and improved.
—All the scenery of the travelling Lights of London companies is being overhauled and renewed.
—The Kiralfys have already begun rehearsals of Sieba. Scenic artists are at work in the Star Theatre.

—Seven companies will be under the management of Gustave and Charles Frohman the coming season.
—Sydney Haven, late of Miles and Barton's Bijou company, has been engaged for the Two Johns company.

—Professor Edward Holtz is engaged upon the translation of a comedy from the Danish, his native tongue.

—The Vine Street Opera House (variety), Cincinnati, will be reopened by Manager Gabriel on August 2.

—It is reported that C. D. Hess and W. T. Carleton will amalgamate their operatic forces for the coming season.

—A professional matinee of The Corner Grocery will be given at Tony Pastor's Theatre to-morrow (Friday).

—The rehearsals of In the Ranks began on Tuesday. It opens in San Francisco on August 18 for four weeks.

—James C. Duff will present the Trip to Africa the coming season, having secured the sole right to the opera.

—Romany Rye, a company, opens its season in Montreal on Sep. 15. The rehearsals of B company begin to-day.

—Philip Branson has joined the Ford Opera company. J. T. Clarke and wife (Mary Herrick) have left that company.

—Walter Brooks, who appeared in The Dead Heart at the New Park Theatre, has signed with Rhea for 1904-5.

—Dan'l Shelby, of the Chicago Academy of Music, arrived in the city on Monday. He returns home in about a week.

—Edgar Strakosch says that Maurice Grau has secured Violot, a clever French opera bouffe artist, to support Thon.

—Sydney Howard will not return to America this season, having had several engagements offered him in England.

—Charles Frohman has had a new set of silver-plated rifles and bayonets made for the Callender Minstrels' souvere drill.

—Sophie Lingwood coached C. P. Flockton in the music of Gaspard, in the Chimes. Mr. Flockton's music had become rather rusty.

—The People's Theatre, Cincinnati, will be thoroughly renovated and redecored and will open for the season Saturday, August 23.

—Four operas contribute to a garbling of Estrella, Luscombe Searelle's comic opera, now being sung by the Wilbur company in Cleveland.

—Edward L. Bloom and wife are resting at Sands Point Beach. Mr. Bloom occasionally runs into town on the sly to get his mail. He is beset by people desiring engagements in the Josephine Reiley company.

—W. P. Shelden is adjourning at Washington. He is expected to come East in a few weeks.
—E. J. Parker will produce in October an emotional drama which has been written by Elise Lantier.

—Elmer Morell, after completing her engagement with Chapman and Sellers, expects to make an Australian tour.

—Fred. Bryson has been engaged for the leading male part in Caprice, which Minnie Madden produces at the New Park on August 11.

—Several professionals are building houses at New Rochelle. John Henson, J. H. Ry, Iry and Philip Goucher are among the number.

—C. J. Berbeck began on Monday night to play the part of Tom Nolan, in The Corner Grocery. He is late of the Monte Cristo company.

—Under Robert Mann's management a new comedy called The Two Witnesses will be produced at the Ogdens Garden, Boston, next week.

—Frank Sanger and Fred. McCloy have gone to Boston to attend to business in connection with the Branch of Keys and Dreams companies.

—Theodore Moss was the only person opposed to Marie Lee Price exhibiting at Wallack's. He formed a very poor opinion of her powers.

—The Monte Cristo company returned to town on Monday. The members are enthusiastic over the recent successful California engagement.

—It is rumored that Herman Couriel has been engaged by the Ardenians to manage the Casino productions on the expiration of the McCullough term.

—The summer season of opera at the Baltimore Academy was announced to close this week. An unexpected increase in business has extended it.

—Joan Goodrich and Little Edie Goodrich have been engaged for The Bonny Byn, Miss Goodrich will play Laura Lee and Edie will be the gypsy boy.

—Edmond J. Levy returned to town from Chicago on Sunday. He had gone on to attend Rice and Disney's Adonis. He leaves for Europe on Saturday.

—Kenneth and Morris have begun suit against Townsend Percy and Henry G. Colbert for \$775—the deficiency upon the credit opera season in Brooklyn.

—W. H. Gillilan has been re-engaged by C. R. Gardner to play Harold Lanson in the Farmer's Daughter—a part in which he has never with fewer the past season.

—Frederick Clifton, late of Confession and other companies, is successfully touting the hotels of the principal watering-places with a concert and dramatic company.

—Frances Bishop, the star of Hagg's Landing during the coming season, was the guest of the Columbia Yacht Club on Monday, and christened their new yacht *Starfish*.

—John Harrington, the leading juvenile of Bertha Welby's company, was three years ago an ornament of the amateur ranks. He is a nephew of an ex-Governor of Indiana.

—With but two exceptions, the cast now playing in The Chimes of Normandy at the Bijou is identical with the cast which performed the opera at the Standard Theatre a few seasons ago.

—The lease of the New Standard Theatre has not yet been granted. Among rumored bidders are Henry E. Abbey, Colonel McCull, William Henderson and Gale and Spader.

—Edward Warren does not appear in M. B. Curtis' new play, Spot Cash. He did not like the part assigned him. Mr. Curtis kindly released him. This leaves Mr. Warren still at liberty.

—Owing to the disappointing nature of Mattie Lee Price's exhibition of magnetic powers at the Bijou on Saturday afternoon, it was decided on Sunday not to exhibit her at Wallack's.

—On Saturday Sydney Rosefield and George W. Lechner had a passage-arms on Broadway. Byanders saved the librettist from being used up. Rosefield begins his career rather early.

—Maur Malvey, the mischievous youngster in The Corner Grocery, was originally a Boston Boothlack. He is a remarkably intelligent lad, and a good boy to his mother, whom he supports.

—Falsa celebrated its hundredth night last evening. It is a coincidence that the Casino and the Madison Square, both of which are open the year round, should have a hundredth night within two days.

—Januchowicz will play the title role in The Little Duke; Agnes Folsom, the Duchess; Rose Leighton, the schoolmistress, and the remaining principal characters will be filled by J. H. Ryley and Hubert Wilkin.

—The ticket speculators affect the neighborhood of Wallack's very much just at present. In the early season they will make a determined stand, and are now arranging a line of defense. They look forward to a good season.

—The Devil's Auction company has had a drop-scene painted by Hurley Henry which is a counterpart of one painted by Walter Gurney for Orpheus and Eurydice. As the Devil's Auction was produced in San Francisco just preceding the Bijou company, the latter were at a disadvantage, when they were not aware of until their arrival in that city. Consequently the world of scenic art is excited over an unprofessional action.

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The Abbott opera house, proprietor of Phillips' Opera House, is the oldest opera house in the city, dated Wednesday at the age of sixty-three years. He came to this city at the age of thirty, but at his death was worth \$75,000. He has been an invalid for the past fifteen years. His death should not interfere with the remodeling of the Opera House, which is now under way, or the lease of Dublin Brothers as managers.

The Emma Abbott Opera Co. was the best attraction in that line we had the past season. Gus Wilson, Harry's Nephews and the Two Johns Comedy Co. drew the best in their respective lines. A concert is always a long feature here. I do not think that a com-

TOPEKA.
Crawford's Opera House (1. M. Crawford, manager). This popular place of amusement responded with the Callender's Colored Minstrel, always a drawing card here, and doubly welcome now from the dearth of amusements during the heated term. The troupe is to well known to need criticism at this late day, so suffice it to say that they gave their usual varied and interest-

MILFORD.
Music Hall (George G. Cook, manager). No improvements or changes are contemplated for the present. Can't seem to be looking as far ahead for the coming season as usual, ten good ones are engaged up

The Pathfinder, played to a big house; Bunch of Fools, played to a big house; Remedy, fiddled to almost empty seats; Bertha Welby, good house; Banker's Daughter, good house; Clara Louise Kellogg, good house; tie to Adam's Humpty Dumpty, good house; Jane Cow-

100

The Usher.



In Usher
 "The Usher" (left) and "The Usher" (right).
 —Love's Labor's Lost.

Charles Maubury has been in the city looking after some wages of his business. He and his wife are spending the summer at the Maubury House, Manchester, kept by Mrs. Agnes Booth. Maubury says that, with the exception of himself and John Schofield, there are no professionals at the Maubury House, for the reason, as he expresses it, that the prices are steep and the guests Boston blue-bloods, with pedigrees as long as those of the Bench show champions. Maubury's partner, the indefatigable Overton, who is now in England, will return to New York on the 6th of August, bringing with him Annie Baldwin, the newly engaged leading lady, and a number of new plays by Frank Harvey. Maubury and Overton are crazy on the subject of this dramatist and his works, and they have bespoken the rights for this country to all the pieces that he writes during the next five years.

Clifton Taylors is here attending to Chaffin interests. The veteran regards next season's outlook as gloomy in the extreme. "The trouble is just here," says he. "Nearly every manager closed last season deeply in debt. This deficiency must be added to the expenses of the coming campaign. When this is done what margin is left for profit? The small towns are the places where most money is made. In these the political disturbance will be felt acutely. In a one-night stand where my attraction is to play three torchlight processions are arranged for my date. Had I not booked a tour I should keep out of theatricals until the times were more propitious."

Another experienced manager, Horace Wall, takes a different view of the matter. He believes that one season is about as good as another, and that an average prosperity will be preserved. "The people who will be singled," he asserts, "are those that have more interests or 'enterprises' than they are able to look after. Mammoth management may prosper for a time, but in the end the Napoleonic operators come to grief. I know one firm in this city who have secured many weeks of time for unnamed attractions, with managers all over the country. They do this to get a pull and slide in companies which are second-class, but will be accepted by the managers in question on account of the other and better parties also sent them. This reserved time is now being offered in other quarters by the managers themselves, who have lost confidence in the ability of the New York firm to fill their dates. The wildcat system of conducting theatricals must end sooner or later. Conservatism is necessary in management. Bohl speculators are the kind that inevitably get left."

Pursuing the same subject with W. J. Comley, that gentleman, who is an acute and intelligent observer of movements in the dramatic field, remarked: "Next season is going to be dull—very dull. There is apprehension in financial circles, and business generally is in a more critical condition than people suppose who have not given the matter close attention. In the West, especially since the late Wall Street flurry, the banks have been left in an almost penniless state. Depositors have drawn out their money and put it in secret places for safe-keeping. This money is not available at all times, and therefore a large class will deprive themselves of the privilege of play-going. Until confidence is restored, and the financial channels flow with pure water, the people will not feel like adventuring their craft here, there and everywhere. Meantime, I expect to see hard times for all branches of business, including the theatrical."

In presenting the views of these three managers I do not endorse any of them. They go to show the feeling of anxiety which exists in various quarters. There is no reason that I can discern for entertaining fears about the immediate future. Pessimistic predictions have been uttered Summer after Summer, but I do not remember any of them having been fulfilled. The season of 1894-95 will probably be no better or worse than its predecessors.

Bartley Campbell has rented his place down at Staten Island, and taken a house on Fifty-first Street, where he and his penates are now

domesticated. The other day Bartley invested some of his lace in a tenement-house, situated on the West side, formerly owned by T. Henry French. Monday morning the dramatist, accompanied by a friend well acquainted with property of this description, made a tour of inspection over the newly acquired building. Such equalizer and misery Campbell never saw before, even in his old Bohemian days.

"Are all the tenements in the city like this?" he asked of his companion after they had finished the investigation and repaired to a neighboring corner grocery for the purpose of procuring some cholera preventive, "and can it be possible that human beings exist in such pig-styes?"

"Why, certainly," replied the friend; "I assure you there are few places so clean and healthy as that we have looked at."

Bartley's eyes were opened for the first time to the misery here in this great city, and by means of a speculative investment—one of the results of his opulence. He means to write a melodrama at once, a *Le G. R. Sims*, and he proposes to secure the material for it by "slumming" on his own premises.

Professionals who have friends or relatives doing the grand tour abroad are greatly exercised over the cholera scare. Louis Aldrich is debating whether it is not wise to take to his wife and daughter, who are in Paris, to return to this country at once. He is disinclined to send this summons, because his family are permanently located in the French Capital, and he believes that the plague is quite as likely to rage here as there. Nevertheless, he is on the anxious seat, and is watching the foreign news columns of our dailies with apprehension.

Charles A. Meendum is in town, flashing bottles of greeting with his friends. He says the report is untrue that he severs his connection with Mrs. Langtry. He holds a contract which has yet six months to run, and he will direct the forthcoming tour of the Lily. He admitted to a friend yesterday that during the season he did not keep five sets of books, but he added that he had no reason, nevertheless, to feel dissatisfied with the results, viewed from a pecuniary standpoint.

Edward Harrigan writes me from Schraon Lake (where he is having a royal time) to contradict a false impression which has crept about concerning the new play with which the Comique campaign is to open. The title of the piece is *Investigation*. "It is not," says Mr. Harrigan, "a satire upon local politics, as has been stated, but a skin upon our State legislators who come to investigate the horrors of the great city. During their investigations I give them a whirl. Six original musical gems have been composed for the play by Mr. Graham."

Fred. de Belleville is back from San Francisco and his triumphs as Noirtier in Monte Cristo. He looks handsomer than ever, and is pardonably elated over the prominence he has achieved despite many serious obstacles. Yesterday he left the city for a quiet neighboring watering place, where he will remain ten days, in order to get the words of Wilfrid Denver, the Silver King, into his head. I think he will give a fine performance of this effective character, and Manager Miner is evidently of the same opinion, for he intends to make a feature of De Belleville in his announcements.

Previous to its production there were grounds for believing that Distrust would at least deserve a respectful hearing. Its trial in Buffalo was reported to be very successful, and people here were especially predisposed in favor of the play because the *Comique* had endorsed it. Mr. Tom Keene is known as the dramatic editor of that paper, and his judgment is esteemed by the profession. But the attitude of the *Comique* toward Distrust may better be understood when it is explained that Mr. Keene is reported to have mysteriously disappeared several weeks before the initial representation of the play and to have been missing ever since. Somebody else wrote the Distrust notice, and that somebody was evidently enormously ignorant of his duties. The manner in which the management is advertising the piece, by the way, is as silly as the piece itself. On Tuesday morning, notwithstanding that Distrust had scored an unequivocal failure, the newspapers contained cards, the prominent lines of which were: "Another great success in the theatre of successes. Crowded houses. Enthusiastic audiences." Now this would be truthful if Distrust had not proved a fiasco. There had been only one house at the time this advertisement appeared, and it was the reverse of enthusiastic. That sort of thing may do in Buffalo, but it's a trifle too attenuated to deceive metropolitan theatre-goers.

A New Theatre in New Orleans.

Next season David Bidwell will have a little opposition in New Orleans. Louis Grunewald, for a long period manager of the best class of musical attractions at the hall bearing his name, has had the building converted into a popular theatre, and will open his season about Sept. 1. His manager, Joseph Flanner, arrived in New York on Saturday, and detailed to a *Mirror* man the improvements

that have been made and the intentions of the management.

"The new theatre," said Mr. Flanner, "is a bijou. It will seat about 975 people. It has only an orchestra and balcony. There are no boxes. Our prices of admission and for seats will be \$1.00 and 50 cents. We desire to make it a parlor theatre. The stage is thirty-five feet deep, with a proscenium opening of twenty-eight feet. Any artist who has ever appeared in the old hall will testify as to its acoustic properties. The situation, just off Canal street, near to all the lines of street cars, is unrivalled. The Cotton Exposition, which opens on Dec. 1 and runs until March, ensures us a good season."

"Will the French Opera House be open during the coming season?" asked the reporter.

"Yes. Richard, an opera tenor, is now in Paris making his arrangements. He was formerly in De Fosse's stock company."

The Story of the Grocery.

Meeting Dan Sully in the lobby of Tony Pastor's the other day, a *Mirror* reporter asked him what effect, disheartening or otherwise, the Atkinson-Peck *Bad Boy* manifestations had upon him. Mr. Sully smiled and said:

"I will reply to them in due season. But now let me relate the history of this *Bad Boy* business. I will be as brief as possible. The first *Bad Boy* dramatization was from my pen. I wrote it in good faith—evolved a play from a lot of newspaper sketches. Were these sketches 'Entered according to Act' or were 'rights reserved'? Of course not. It was fugitive material that any dramatist could lay hold of. Did Petroleum V. Nasby pay for the privilege of dramatizing the *Willow Buds* Papers? Does B. P. Shillaber draw any royalties from the sketch based on his Mrs. Partington paragraphs? Hundreds of plays have been written from material drawn from newspaper sources. However, Mr. Peck sent a lawyer all the way from Chicago to Providence to enjoin me. I let the case go by default. But I determined to write a play with a mischievous boy as the central figure, and took the old farce, *The Chimney Corner*, as the groundwork. I carefully avoided the terms 'Peck' and 'Bad Boy.' Now mark the result. I played *The Corner Grocery* on the road for several months, and without a word of protest from Peck, or any of the people interested in the three or four *Bad Boy* companies struggling for an existence. Peck's *Bad Boy* had made a flat failure at the Comedy Theatre. I came to New York on the top of this failure and made a success. Then came a series of warnings to managers—dire results to follow the use of the terms 'Peck,' 'Bad Boy,' or 'Groceryman.'

"The Corner Grocery is the name of my play. It has a coherent story. Peck's *Bad Boy* is slung-together variety business. I have met Mr. Peck; I could have had his *Bad Boy* if I had chosen to put myself into a strait-jacket of royalties, rights, etc. On the 16th of August *The Grocery* will have had a run of eleven weeks at Pastor's. This is an unusually long Summer run—in fact, it is the only success of the hot season. It is but natural that Peck and Atkinson should be jealous. But their attempt to identify my *Grocery* with their *Bad Boy*, and thus steal a little thunder, will fail. I have my pick of dates, and will begin a tour of the principal week-stands, opening at Baltimore on August 19."

Incidents More or Less Amusing

Early in the season a young Englishman toured the Southwest with a feminine star and came to grief in Texas. He found that he could not compete with small companies with brass bands and extensive repertoires. "Why," said he, "I should never have come to the country 'ad I known about this brawns bawnd business. It's a brawns bawnd parade in the afternoon, a brawns bawnd serenade at supper, and a brawns bawnd concert before the performance. Should I ever travel through that country again I shall be provided with a brawns bawnd. And then these little managers—what a stock of plays they carry, and printing for all of 'em! There's the M—n G—n company; it's a brawns bawnd affair, and can play a whole week in a town of three thousand population—a poor one-night stand for a respectable company. The local manager whispers something in the brawns bawnd manager's ear. The latter says:

"Certainly—of course! Chawley," he shouts to an underling, "go to No. 3 bill-trunk and get out the paper for 'Azel Kirke'!"

When Dan Sully played *The Corner Grocery* in Syracuse the *Evening Herald* of that city gave the piece a good send-off. Manager Lehnen called Mr. Sully's attention to the fact, and the latter beckoned an ever-present "small boy," gave him some loose change, and told him to get him a "dozen *Heralds*." The boy returned in a few minutes with a loosely done up brown-paper parcel. Mr. Sully opened the parcel and found that the boy had made a misce— it contained a *dozen* *hering*—herring of the reddest. Manager Lehnen laughed himself into a condition of faintness.

The Bunch of Keys Season.

Manager Frank Sanger arrived in the city with his company, Tuesday evening, having come direct from Sacramento, Cal., where the Sparks season closed Sunday night, 13th. The Bunch has had a more than usually prosper-

ous season. The six weeks' season on the Pacific Coast has added materially to its prestige. Meeting Manager Sanger in the lobby of the Union Square Hotel, yesterday morning, he said to a representative of *The Mirror*:

"My season has been very satisfactory in every respect. Business has been really better than I had anticipated; but the impression that it has been enormous is erroneous. The fact is we have done a good average business. The most gratifying circumstance respecting the season, generally, is that where we have played return engagements the receipts have increased from twenty to forty per cent."

"Will you retain the present company for next season?"

"For the most part—yes. I will possibly make one or two unimportant changes, simply to strengthen the minor parts, but that's all."

"How did you find San Francisco—from a business point of view?"

"Well, as we are apt to judge places and things from our own experience, I should say San Francisco is remarkably brisk just now. O'Neill in Monte Cristo took the city by storm, and Langtry did enormously. The Devil's Auction followed Bunch of Keys at the Bush, and their first week was very large. But San Francisco is like all other cities: it is susceptible to over-doing, and, if what I hear about the number of companies getting ready to go out, or are on the way there, be true, somebody is going to come to grief."

"What other companies will you have besides the Sparks next season?"

"The Flora Moore company, which will play Bunch of Keys over the same territory as last season; another Bunch for Canada and the Northwest, and the Dreams company, with Jacques Kruger, the original Photographer, at its head. The demand for Dreams from all parts of the country is very great, and justifies high anticipations of a prosperous season. This company will be managed by Walter Hine, who has already booked upward of thirty-five weeks."

The Ham-Fat Decline.

When the ancient rhymist told us that "every dog would have his day" he didn't let us know the length of the day nor what was to become of the animal when its day was over? The principal significance of the rhymist's wise saw is in the hint it conveys to us, that until the arrival of "the day" the dog must have had a pretty hard time. Perhaps it is as well that we should not know too much of the typical animal in the season of his prosperity, as probably he was less interesting in his hours of triumph than in his days of adversity. But, if any one has the heart to picture the dog after "his day," and see him declining from the dignity of ease and comfort to the miseries of obscurity, he will have conjured up a melancholy but interesting study of everyday life.

An imagination thus vivid is necessary for the realization of the present position of the ham-fat section of the American stage. Like the apocryphal dog, the ham-fatter has had his day, and, like the same animal, he certainly had a hard time of it before his day arrived. But, unlike the case of the dog, we are permitted to see the ham-fatter in the day of his decline, and we are bound to add that he cuts quite a respectable figure in adversity. If wise, he has saved money during his day, and can afford to go back to legitimate paths, in case he left such for the ham-fat walks, or he can become a manager or speculator with plenty of experience to add to his capital. He thoroughly realizes that his day as a ham-fatter is over, and herein lies the best hope of his decline being an easy and tolerable one.

The origin of the term "ham-fat" is enveloped in the clouds of mystery. Its most experienced disciple is unable to explain it, or even trace its growth. It came upon the theatrical world without hint or warning, and was adopted without question and as generally as the social world accepted the equally mysterious term, "dude." If we were asked to make a guess at the foundation of the term "ham-fat" we should say that it was evolved in some peculiar way from the old variety song of "The Soup-fat Man," and seeing that the ham-fat school largely consisted of an invasion of the stage by artists of the variety and burnt-cork order, we are disposed to think our speculation not an unlikely one.

Though now in his decline, the ham-fatter has certainly had his day, and a long one, too. It has stretched over a period of at least ten years, and though not without its moments of failure and disappointment, has on the whole been highly prosperous. The arrival of the Vokes Family in this country first quickened the ham-fat tendencies of our native players. They observed, not without envy, how a little party of five persons could hold an audience for an entire evening, and they also discovered that there were playgoers in this country who didn't care to have their heads troubled with plots or their feelings harrowed by sentiment or sensation.

The Salisbury Troubadours were the first American actors to take advantage of this discovery, and they formed themselves into a party of five, just like the Vokes Family, and put together a patchwork entertainment resembling that by which the Vokes people first became known to this country. Their success of course produced scores of imitators, and in a few seasons the land became flooded with Tourists, Serpentine Parties, and other combinations which gave specialties instead of plays,

and transformed our open houses and parlors of made-to-order variety shows. Four years ago the ham-fat school cut out to the height of its prosperity. Just before the opening of the season of 1890-91, twenty-seven ham-fat companies were announced as about to take the road and occupy the stages of our regular theatres. For the coming season we may reduce this number by about twenty and arrive at the total that remains after four years.

The exposure of the ham-fat school have been of two classes, the first consisting of actors and actresses who, in an artistic sense, may be said to have descended from the regular to the irregular stage, and the other, singers and dancers from variety shows, who regularly ascended when they joined the ham-fat formations. The real champions of the drama and those judges of the dignity of the American stage may find comfort in the fact that the first to go to the wall among the ham-fatters were the class which sprung from the variety theatres and minstrel shows. These people may be said to have had less talent than their rivals who had descended from the legitimate stage, and obviously and somewhat simplistically clinging to the belief that public taste had got into a groove from which it was never going to escape.

The better trained and more intelligent ham-fatters from the regular theatres perceived that though variety may be the opium of the eyes it is only a stimulant, and can never take the place of substantial food. Hence these people began to dress their entertainments in something like dramatic shape, while the old variety element either clung to the form in which they had once succeeded, or made the mistake of becoming more modern than even. If four or five years ago any one had suggested to the successful ham-fatter of either class that his entertainment would be better for being put into dramatic form, and that he should surround his specialties with a plot or story, the suggestion would have been met with the derision, and the suggestion perhaps told, in emphatic if ungrammatical language, that the people "didn't want no plots."

Nevertheless, what we have called the decline of ham-fatness are nothing other nothing more currently than plays or comedies in which they can introduce their special features without injury to the story or plot. But to be just to, or, in other words, in plays of this kind the players must have something of the art of acting, and this is where the ham-fatter school originally in the regular theatre has the advantage over his brethren who graduated from the variety stage. In developing from an entertainer to a comedian, the legitimately trained ham-fatter is only going back to first principles, while for the player who has been in the variety business to come to grips with other all his life the effort to become an actor is a somewhat serious one. Hence it will be found that of the two classes of comedians which have disappeared in the last few years, nearly all the members of them are "old variety people," and of the comedians which remain it will also be found that their numbers are without exception are what are called "old comedians."

While what is left of the ham-fat school still call themselves by fanciful names, and actually cling to the character by which they made their reputation, it will be found that the entertainments they now give differ very little in form from those of ordinary and legitimate comedy companies. To be sure, an occasional song or dance is dragged in, as it were, by the ears, but this is done more out of habit than to the past than from necessity. We know that songs and dances have been introduced in comedies, dramas and even tragedies from time immemorial, so that the element of the ham-fat school have now very little left beyond their names to distinguish them from the rest of the dramatic world.

The reasons for the decline of the ham-fat school are not very far to seek. The Vokes Family came here as an economic society, and the favor the public accorded them was a popular freak. Entertainments like these became the fashion, but, like all fashions based on eccentricity, was certain of only a brief existence. That it lived so long may be attributed to the singular inventiveness of the American actor, who found so many ingenious methods of dressing up the one idea with which the Vokes people were equipped. Thus again, the skill with which this idea was handled and made the vehicle for humorous and satirical pictures of American life prolonged the fashion far beyond its natural limits. The Vokes people to-day, or at least last season, when they were here, gave an entertainment, though changed in name, to all towns and groups the same as that by which they have lived for the last fifteen years. On the other hand, our own ham-fatters seemed daily on the look for fresh notions, and those they called, on always with acceptance, even from actors and writers who would as soon think of writing for the stage as of amending the Constitution of the United States. Did a bit of eccentric verse appear in a corner of a Sunday newspaper, the quick-witted American ham-fatter "worked it" into his entertainment, while the Vokes people hurried away at their old-fashioned ditties and then were re-contricted.

But even all this ingenuity and labor could not save the ham-fat drama, and like a great many other things of fad and fickle character it was seen that it must go, and gone it certainly has. We cannot say that nothing became it in its life more than its having of it, because its decay has been undignified and its departure almost comical. Possibly its departure from our stage may have room for something even more objectionable, but we are glad to say that at present we are no sign of this. The drama has returned to something like its original and legitimate character, and in the interests of the theatre, the public and the actor this is certainly a thing to be grateful for.

We have left ourselves no room to speak of the future of the ham-fatter who ascended from the variety stage. Perhaps he has no future, in which case we need not discuss him. At all events he can return to his original vocation, and perhaps now that the regular stage is no longer the rival of the minstrel show and the theatre of variety, he may find a return to first principles more profitable than it would have been a few years ago. If he find no comfort in this suggestion we have no hope for him. His era on the regular stage is certainly over, and if he will not or cannot find his old place among the minstrel and song and dance men we fear his future, so far as the theatre is concerned, is a very dark one.

Abraham Erlanger, last season with the Knights, will assume charge of John Burth's new venture, *The Wonderful Book* combination. Scott Marble stands responsible for the play. The company is now being organized.

Managers of To-day.

We are sorry to see that in one very important respect the promise of last season is not likely to be fulfilled in this or in any season of the near future. Just twelve months ago the profession and the playing public cherished the hope that theatrical managers were about to return to old principles, and that the days of stock companies were coming again. Of course it was not expected that such a revolution would be accomplished all at once, but a year ago there were enough indications of such a volume change as to encourage a pleasing belief in its speedy arrival.

One well-established theatre, the Fifth Avenue, was announced to have cut itself adrift from the combination and travelling company system, and another, the New Park Theatre, was to be devoted entirely to the production of new plays. Here indeed was ground for hope of a return to the healthy days of the past. But alas for such lofty aspirations! The Fifth Avenue's career as a stock theatre lasted about eight weeks, during which time Mr. Charles Coghlan led Mr. Stetson's forces to disaster by means of money. The Duke's Men and A Celebrated Case, occupying just three weeks in the accomplishment. The other five weeks were filled up with Confusion, acted by one of Mr. Stetson's "troupes," which by courtesy was called a stock company, though as a matter of fact it had been travelling through the country until called to New York in its manager's emergency. The rest of the season at the Fifth Avenue was given up to comic opera, travelling companies, and finally to entertainments which bordered very close upon the variety kind; so that in reality Mr. Stetson's efforts toward making his house a stock theatre did not extend beyond a period of three weeks.

The attempt to return to first principle at the New Park Theatre was a more ambitious one than that of Mr. Stetson. Messrs. Stevens and Murtha were not only to give us a good stock company, but to produce new and original plays in high-class style. Their "stock" season lasted exactly four weeks, thereby beating Mr. Stetson by six nights and two minutes, and their plays were three in number. The first of these, Her Sacrifice, though not without merit, turned out to be an adaptation from a French melodrama, which had done service in America before; the second was a monstrous dramatization of one of Charles Reade's stories, and the third and last was Miss Dolore's translation of an early and forgotten work of Sardou. Of course it is needless to say that the speculations in both theatres were disastrous in a financial sense, and worse in being fatal in their effects on others managers who had thought of giving up the combination system.

Thus we see that seven weeks divided between two theatres was all the performance we got from the abundant promises with which last year the theatrical world was filled. That the stock company system obtained a fair trial no one, we venture to think, will maintain. Messrs. Stevens and Murtha had doubtless sufficient and indisputable reasons for bringing their ambitious efforts to a close, but surely Mr. Stetson, with his vast resources, might have stuck to his colors a little longer. To have "squealed" before the first week was over, to have gone half-distracted in the middle of the second, and to have given up the game at the end of the third was hardly worthy of one who has been described as the "luckiest and wealthiest manager in America." However, such was the unhappy result of last season's venture back to the legitimate fold.

For the coming season we may cast our eye over the New York theatrical firmament without discovering a ray of hope that matters will be any better than they have been for the last seven years. Indeed, a sorer view of the situation convinces us that the next season will be somewhat worse than its predecessors. We will certainly have our three stock theatres, Wallack's, Daly's and the Union Square, as before; but in each the regular season promises to be shorter than heretofore. Messrs. Shook and Collier are so reducing the Union Square "regular season" that in a few years we may get only a flying visit from their admirable and popular company. Mr. Daly's stock company will probably not appear in New York for more than four or five months this season, and now even Lester Wallack, whose artistic degeneracy nobody anticipated or thought possible, has arranged to keep his famous company on the road for at least half of the regular season, giving over his classic stage to "productions" and combinations of a miscellaneous description. Our grief at this fall from grace is only slightly mitigated by hearing that Mr. Wallack has declared that in his selection of miscellaneous attractions he will not again include magnetic or muscular "wonders," whether they come from Georgia or Alaska.

Although we have spoken of what is decidedly the greatest reproach to our managers, we can see signs of other frailties which will be injurious alike to the profession and the public. It is becoming evident that the managers of combination theatres no longer intend to make any attempt toward mounting the plays which travelling companies may give at their houses. They are determined to take "on risks," and without the combinations bring their own scenery, as they happily do in many cases, they will have to depend upon the scenic furniture of the theatres, most of which has long since passed its days of attractiveness, if not of usefulness.

In fact the majority of New York managers of to-day would be doing themselves little injustice if they styled themselves theatrical janitors. Their functions are rapidly descending to those useful but humble duties for which the janitor of a public hall is engaged. It is true they may have a little managerial work between seasons, when they "book" dates and "fill in" them; but when once the season opens the difference between their labors and those of the lofty janitor are not easy to distinguish. To be sure, the average manager hardly sees himself and his position in this light. Still calling himself a "manager," he still fancies that he is one, and when some success, entirely unaccounted for as far as he is concerned, occurs at his house, he will shake hands with himself and congratulate his foresight just as if he had secured a huge sum. More than one amusing instance of this ability of vision might have been observed by the curious last season.

When certain combinations failed at certain theatres, the managers felt themselves able to lay all the blame upon the conductors of these unfortunates, and would adopt an "I told you so" tone that must have been somewhat hard to bear. At the same time the manager would felicitate himself on having secured such terms that no loss could possibly fall on his shoulders, and would carefully revise his list of attractions for the next season, so that the unfortunate one would either be excluded from it or find a place in it at terms which would make loss a dead certainty.

On the other hand, when through the enterprise of some plucky actor or actress, who buys a great play from a great author, spends thousands of dollars in costumes and scenery, and then produces it at the house of our typical manager, it is a grand and ennobling sight to see him basking in the sun at matinee time, or growing haggard in the electric light at night, while the public are fighting their way to his box-office. He takes all the credit to himself, and probably really persuades himself that he commissioned Sardou or Dumas to write the play, induced Fanny Davenport or some other eminent actress to buy it for the express purpose of producing it at his theatre. Of course he feels that there is nothing of the janitor about him in these happy circumstances; but when one week of The Red Flag or In the Hands is followed by six nights of Callender's Parti colored Minstrels, what else can he feel himself to be but the janitor or front-door keeper of a New York theatre?

The wonder is that since it has become so easy to manage metropolitan theatres that we have any managers at all. Why do not the proprietors or builders of our places of amusement manage them themselves, or at most employ an agent to let out their time, just as the proprietors of nine-story dwelling houses keep an agent to let their flats or apartments? Perhaps this is what we are coming to after all, and really, seeing the condition to which the science of theatrical management has come, the public would find very little difference between the two systems. To be sure of small profits and to be guaranteed against loss is a very nice and comfortable business in which to be engaged. But it is in the first place very un-American, and it is further never likely to lead to fortune, and what perhaps is of little moment, it can never be the means of making a reputation.

Boucicault's Return.

The veteran, who arrived on Sunday, has joined his family at Manhattan Beach. A Minton representative, by invitation, had the pleasure of an hour's conversation with him at his Summer retreat. Mr. Boucicault was not in the best of health when he left these shores, but now his physical condition is of the best, considering his age. He greeted this Minton man with heartiness and said he was the first representative of the dramatic press to whom he had given audience. Referring to his visit to England he said:

"Over there they look upon me as an American. Well, I was naturalized here over thirty years ago. When I first came to America it was my intention to stay. Cutting loose from the old sold lost me many copyrights. Most of my dramas were produced here first. When successful they have been sent abroad—a reversal of the present system."

"Was your voyage for health or pleasure?"

"Both. My nerves were unstrung. In two hours I had made up my mind to take passage. I had but little business to attend to in London and did not move around much. I had one funny adventure. In search of an actress for my company to play such parts as Lady Gay Spanker, Miss Helen Leigh, then playing at Brighton, was recommended. Seeing her act, I concluded that she was the artist I wanted. On engaging her she remarked: 'It is very funny, Mr. Boucicault, that you should come over here and engage me. Four years ago, in New York, I sought you for an engagement and you denied me.' Miss Leigh at that time was not the artist she is now."

"You were present at Mr. Irving's revival of Twelfth Night, Mr. Boucicault?"

"Yes, and I think it unfair to say that the production was condemned. One malcontent can create a commotion in an audience. Do not confound my opinion of and admiration for Irving. I admire Mr. Irving because he is not a pedestal actor. His earnest desire to give a thorough and perfect representation of every character and detail is most commendable. Mr. Booth is the only perfect thing in his productions."

"But is that Mr. Booth's fault?"

"No, it is not. Mr. Booth has sacrificed much to his art, but the times were probably not propitious. Of course, I do not say that Mr. Irving is the greatest actor of his time; but I esteem him greatly, and commend his labors in the cause of art."

"The greater number of stars in America would be accepted as capable leading people in English companies of the first-class. There the company is the star; here it is the individual. I think this will be righted in time, and that the future of the American drama is bright."

"Bernhardt's Lady Macbeth?"

"Horrible. I dare say that if the creation had been French instead of English, Bernhardt would have achieved a success. But it is impossible to translate the Saxon idiom into French. I afterward saw her play Fedora, and have placed it among the treats of my life."

"You propose producing several plays the coming season?"

"Yes. In 1853-54 I launched five successful plays in four months, and although I do not propose to present so many now, I think the result will be more remarkable."

The Mountain Pink.

Whether more than one Mountain Pink company will be sent on the road is not yet decided. The company that opens in Phila-

delphia on August 25 will be headed by Ada Gilman. The play has been to some extent rewritten. The parts of Sincerity Weeks (Miss Gilman) and Harold Wilmet (Charles F. Tingay) have been greatly strengthened. Harry Hawk will play his original part, Jack Weeks. The other members include Carrie Radcliffe, C. A. McManus, J. M. Johnson, Marie Lear, T. M. Hunter, Genevieve Rogers (original company) and T. J. Langdon. The Pink will open at the New York Comedy Theatre, on Sept. 1, for four weeks.

The Salary Question Again.

Salaries always form a becoming question with actors and managers, but we can recall no time when the profession has been so much excited on the subject as they are at this moment. Managers are frankly declaring that salaries must come down, without giving any satisfactory reason for the reduction. The actors on the other hand, while not claiming any increase, are trying to insist upon retaining the rate of last season.

Their arguments are simply that while salaries look big, they are, when taken in connection with the abbreviated season, no better than they were six or seven years ago. The players also maintain that one of the principal reasons why managers are making such vigorous efforts toward cutting down expenses, is that in anything like a large dramatic combination there are usually from four to six persons financially interested in it, most of whom take part in its management, and all of whom must make money out of it. The actors complain that it is to support these middlemen ("parasites" some of the players call them) that the attempt to reduce their salaries is made.

During the last few days the excitement among the players has been very great. It is not limited, as these agitators often are, to the rank and file of the profession, but is shared by actors and actresses of the highest standing. The manager of a popular theatre, and himself an old actor and once a great "striker" for high salaries, seems to be regarded by the profession as the prime mover in this effort toward "cut rates." After him comes a well known firm of theatrical agents, who are also managers and speculators on a large scale. The manager of the popular theatre, employing a large number of persons, has been trying to make an all-around reduction in his salaries of twenty-five per cent, and with the smaller-salaried people he has succeeded; but now finds himself confronted with what seems to be a determined opposition on the part of artists playing leading roles. A great many of these have expressed their determination to do a season of "jobbing" rather than submit to reductions which they say are not justified by any past experience or prospective dangers.

The firm of agents and managers are endeavoring to cut salaries down not only for themselves as managers, but for other managers for whom they act as agents. It is complained, curiously enough, by both actor and manager, that the agents are not exactly disingenuous in their statements by which they bring about the reductions. For instance, an actor, after much fighting, agrees to take a reduced salary, understanding that he is to travel with a certain company, for which this firm is acting as agent. When he arrives to sign the contract he finds that the firm are securing his services for one of their own speculations, and he either submits to the injurious rearrangement or begins the task of "settling" for next season all over again.

Then, of course, the managers complain of the firm and say that although they have joined in the war against high salaries this firm reserve the pick of the cheap actors for themselves. An instance of the boldness with which this firm are attacking the salary question occurred on Tuesday. A lady of respectable standing in the profession was sent for by the firm and an offer made to her for her own services and that of her two children, and the joint salary proposed was \$35 per week. Last season this lady and her children did for \$20 per week exactly the same work with the same management as that for which they now offer her thirty-five. She was not unnaturally aghast at this offer, and tried to explain that she could not pay board-bills out of thirty-five dollars a week, not to mention that the season was only one of thirty weeks.

To her first objection the firm said that if she "skirmished round on the road" she could get plenty of cheap board; and to the objection about the shortness of the season she was told that she would probably pick up plenty of jobbing after the thirty weeks were over. These arguments did not convince the lady, who did not far cry skirmishing for cheap board in one-night stands, and declined the engagement, the firm taking the refusal calmly and vowing that they could get any number of people on the terms they offered.

Newton Beers.

On our first page is presented a portrait of Newton Beers, in the leading part of Only a Woman's Heart. The following particulars of this actor's career are derived from an authentic source.

Mr. Beers was born in Fairfield County, Conn., April 12, 1832. The eldest of eight children, he at an early age graduated from the old-fashioned district school, and began a mercantile education behind the counter of the village store. Five years later he was occupying a prominent position with the great house of Lord & Taylor, New York City, which position he resigned to enter the dramatic profession in 1854. His initial bow was made at the Griswold Opera House, Troy, N. Y., then under the management of Everett and Van Arnum. The two seasons subsequent he was a member of the stock at the Providence Opera House, William Henderson, manager. He next proceeded to the Olympic Theatre, St. Louis, then under the management of Charles Spalding, where he remained until 1879. During the seasons of 1879-80 he scored an exceptional hit in his original and marvelously vivid delineation of Skinny Smith, the miser, in R. McAuley's A Messenger from Jarvis Section, in which character he has since had many imitators, but no equal. Season of 1881 Mr. Beers again came to the front as Mordred in Augustin Daly's Arabian Nights, and with his

imitable eager and copyright smile he carried off the crown of the nightly fun. This success was clearly followed by another. As Harry Huckleman, the jolly, reckless Bohemian, he was received in a manner which clearly demonstrated the wonderful control he possesses over the feelings of his auditors. In December, 1883, an arrangement was effected by C. R. Gardner, by which Mr. Beers was secured to create the part of Old Roger in his new play, Only a Woman's Heart, which, from the very night of its first presentation in New Orleans has proved a most unqualified success. During the past season he has given his latest and greatest creation in the largest cities, and the extraordinary success which has attended his every appearance, even when he has been in the most well known to need further comment. Thoroughly schooled in his art, with such eminent actors as Booth, Harry Sullivan, McCullough, Barrett, Wallack, Fether, Jefferson, et al., Beers is an old-timer in the profession, though yet young in years. He has had hard knocks, and his pathway has not been over beds of roses. But experience is, after all, the best of teachers, and now that he is entering into fame and fortune he has nothing to unlearn, something which cannot be truthfully said of much more pretentious members of his profession.

Professional Doings.

—Sieta is expected to run three months at the Star Theatre.

—W. E. Sheridan will shortly appear at the Oakland (Cal.) Tivoli.

—Richard Dorney is re-engaged as business manager for Augustin Daly.

—Madame Boniface and Olivette will constitute Catherine Lewis' repertoire.

—Mattie Vickers will next season be under W. C. Mitchell's managerial wing.

—E. M. Gardner has not settled for next season. He was Mayo's manager for seven years.

—The weeks of Oct. 6, 13 and 20 are open at Tony Pastor's Augustus Pitou may be negotiated with.

—Well-Fed Dora drew large Monday and Tuesday night houses this week at the Genesee Park Theatre, Rochester.

—The Knights, with Over the Garden Wall, will open in Philadelphia on Sept. 1. Josh Ogden will be in advance.

—Jennie Yeamans is summering at Wolfboro, Mass. Her sister Lydia is engaged to create an Irish part in Zozo.

—Rhea opens on Sept. 1 in Cleveland. In January J. W. Morrissey takes her management, giving a \$20,000 certainty.

—Ethel (not Marie) Brandon is playing Millie in May Blossom. The error is corrected at Miss Brandon's request.

—Daniel Handmann and Louise Beaudet began an engagement in San Francisco on Tuesday night, when Narcisse was produced.

—John Hanna will manage the Opera House at New Britain, Conn., this season. C. B. Palmer has severed his connection with the house.

—Blanche Corelli takes the management of the Cosmopolitan Theatre on Sept. 1. She will produce comic opera and burlesque at low prices.

—Charles F. Wernig, musical director at the Spanish Fort, New Orleans, and Annie Hastings, a member of the chorus, were married on Monday.

—Shadows of a Great City will probably be continued longer than two weeks at McVicker's Theatre, Chicago. Its second week opened to a fair house.

—Mrs. Fernandez spent yesterday at the New Park Theatre in selecting children for The Seven Ravens. The crowd of juveniles in the neighborhood attracted great attention.

—Harry Lee, Frank Weston and Effie Ellsler come to town from Larchmont to-day. They start West with their company on Tuesday, opening in Kansas City the following Friday.

—Kelley and Smith, the theatrical gas engineers of the Casino, Bijou, Cosmopolitan, Fifth Avenue, Park and other theatres, are filling several large contracts at Boston and elsewhere.

—Ryley and Tannehill, in the cast of Falke, wittily allude to current political and other topics. During the past week they gave an imitation of Lulu Hurst's powers, which brought down the house.

—C. H. Kimball, who has played continuously in New York and Brooklyn for ten weeks, has received an offer from Catherine Lewis to play comedy parts. He goes to his Boston home on Monday.

—Several of the cast of Pinafore at the Cosmopolitan last week, having been engaged by Donnelly and Kerker for The Chimes of Normandy, were discharged by Blanche Corelli. They are suing for a week's salary.

—The Academy of Music at Jersey City will be opened by Manager Henderson on Sept. 1 with Claire and the Forge-Master. The alterations are rapidly progressing. The company for Claire will be a strong one.

—Harrison's Union Square company, playing Hazel Kirke, came to grief in Richmond, Me., the other day. Residents helped the members out of town. Some personal property was left behind in a town near by.

—A Summer opera snap at Atlantic City, N. J., has come to grief. The first salary day was the rock upon which it split. W. H. Fitzgerald and Townsend Percey fathered the venture. By the way, a good many people, including a deputy sheriff, are looking for Mr. Percy. Colonel Morris, of Brooklyn, thinks he has suddenly gone to Europe. Some of the company sent to Atlantic City were tugged out of the boarding-houses.

—Gainesville, Fla., is claimed to be the second best town for theatricals in that State. Its Winter population is 10,000. Simmons's Opera House is complete in modern equipment, and Manager Lousner offers liberal terms.

—Maurice Grau has engaged Cerile Lafont to take Angèle's place in his French Opera co. Lafont has appeared at the Renaissance, Porte St. Martin and Bouffes Theatres in Paris. Besides being beautiful she is said to possess a good voice.

—Miss Kenyon Tilton's name did not appear in the Thru programme on Monday night. Therefore she did not dance—she was especially engaged to execute some steps. The printer was appealed to, and Miss Tilton appeared on Tuesday night.

—Daniel Frohman denies the statement of Gale and Spader that they have an interest of \$1,500 in May Blossom. He says that the piece is likely to make \$60,000 on the road, and that it will be presented at the Madison Square for some time to come.

—Lizzie Evans opens her season at Providence next Monday night. Worcester, Rochester, Pittsburg and the large Western cities follow. This is to some extent a change of programme—that is, the season opens several weeks earlier than anticipated.

—Orpheus and Eurydice is still drawing large audiences at the Baldwin Theatre, San Francisco. Vanoni is the prime favorite. Bluebeard will be put on if the attendance falls off. The Devil's Auction has been withdrawn from the Hush. It will be put on at the Grand Opera House.

—It is as yet undecided whether the preliminary season of the Union Square will be opened with Lynwood or Quena. Both pieces will be produced during the seven weeks for which Tillotson and Williams have secured the house. The cast for Quena is already engaged.

—John E. Harrison, who was with Motjeska last season, and was treasurer of Rice's Surprise Party for many years, is again with Rice, and is treasurer of the Dixey-Rice burlesque company. He has signed with Richard Parker as treasurer of the new St. Louis Theatre, which opens August 10.

—Henry Cuthbert, against whom Colonel Morris is proceeding, yesterday informed a Minton reporter that he ceased his connection with Townsend Percy on July 1. He states, however, that Percy was interested with him in the Brooklyn comic opera snap. Percy has all along denied it. Cuthbert is looking in vain for his late partner.

—The brilliant musical critic of the Cincinnati Enquirer, who, in reviewing a local performance, contrasted De Lange, the comedian, with the "lamented" Dixey, now claims that his effort to kill off the latter in cold type was simply a joke. The fellow's exquisite sense of humor would do credit to an undertaker.

—The comedy element in the spectacle Zozo, the Magic Queen, will be supplied by John D. Griffin, Billy Chase, Harry Miller, Lydia Yeamans and Polly McDonald. The title role will be filled by Irene de Gouvillie, an English actress. Lillie Alma, a specialty artist of considerable reputation, has also been secured on the other side. The company will number fifty people, many of whom are yet to be engaged.

—The New City Theatre in Brockton, Mass., is sometimes confounded with the old Bryant Opera House, an upstairs house, in that city. The New City has no connection with the Bryant. The former is on the ground floor, and is supplied with all the modern accessories. The stage is 36x70 and the curtain-opening 36 x 36 feet. There is a fine green-room, a land-room, ten dressing-rooms, and two lavatories.

Harry Chapman, No. 2 Union Square, is the New York representative. But two attractions a week will be played. A few already booked are: Margaret Mather, Oliver Doud Byron, Maggie Mitchell, Joseph Murphy, Moulton-Baker Opera company, the Hanlons, The Rajah, William Stafford, J. K. Emmet, Denier's Humpty Dumpty and The Bandit King.

Amateur Notes.

Many of the suggestions advanced in these columns in regard to faults in acting, etc., have been met graciously by the various societies in Brooklyn and New York. The only road to improvement is in adverse criticism, when justly written. Unstudied praise has been often extended to novices who have made but a few appearances. Such unwise compliments are liable to destroy future progress. Manners grow by habit and practice and are rarely eradicated.

James Jordan Darling, the popular comedian of the Gilbert, will in the near future lead to the altar a charming young lady of this city. The Gilberts will be present in force.

J. W. Macy, of the Brooklyn Amateur Opera Association and the Greenwich Society of New York, proposes to manage an opera company next season. Mr. Macy has exhibited talent as an amateur, and his professional career will be followed with interest by former associates.

Esmeralda will be presented by amateurs at Walling Hall, Keppert, N. J., on the evenings of August 3 and 4. The production will be under the direction of George A. Humenath, of the Madison Square, and will be in aid of the Keppert Cornet Band. W. Phelps Macfarlane, of the Amaranth, will impersonate Old Roger, and Messrs. Charles Lamb, Charles Macklin and Joseph Wilson, of the Kismet, will also have important characters. Edward Wilson, of the McCullough combination, will manage the stage.

Miss E. J. Grant has not decided whether she will appear in amateur opera next season. She has a highly cultivated voice and acts well.

What Shall I Read?

At this season of leisure many of the fair ones of this Mirror are lounging by the sea or on the mountain side, reclining in orchard shade or woody glen, in rustic scenes or summer houses, or aligned on verandah or terraces of lawn—by whom the question we have at our head is anxiously proposed.

Some are engaged with books, rarely cloth-bound or leather; generally holding in hand the flexible tissues of the seaside or Franklin Library. They take chiefly to the French translations of popular novelists and to the current English writers in that line.

Some fall back on George Eliot, the late Charles Reade, Thackeray and, comparatively few, Dickens. As a rule, Charles Dickens is not a favorite with the ladies. In their estimation he lacks elegance of expression and feminine sympathy; deals too much and too plainly with the harsh realities of life.

A literary statistician has been lately exploring the field of fiction to ascertain which writers of that class were most in vogue. He is a librarian in a Western public library, and reports his experience with readers as to the best ten novels in this order:

But Ten Novels—Vanity Fair, Thackeray; 22. Les Miserables, Hugo; 23. Newcomes, Thackeray; 24. Emma, Austen; 25. Henry James, Thackeray; 26. Adam Sedgwick, Lewis; 27. David Copperfield, Dickens; 28. Ivanhoe, Scott; 29. Middlemarch, Lewis; 30. Tom Jones, Fielding; 31. Mill on the Floss, Lewis; 32. Scarlet Letter, Hawthorne; 33.

It will be noted that there is no place here for Goldsmith's "Vicar of Wakefield," the best domestic romance in the language; Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice," which is at the head of all novels delineating female character by a feminine author; Le Sage's "Gil Blas," greatest as the representative of the picaresque element; Fielding's "Tom Jones," in point of plot, and as the model pioneer in English fiction, unequalled.

As the novelist who has shown the greatest scope of genius, Sir Walter Scott stands *facile princeps*—in proof whereof a recent compilation of an alphabetical list of the personages in the thirty-two novels and novelettes the Wizard of the North shows that they comprise 62 distinct characters. An arrangement of the stories according to the periods in which the scenes are laid, from "Count Robert of Paris," the date of which is 1075, down to "St. Roman's Well," in 1912, there is but one century (the thirteenth) which has not furnished an historical background for one or another of the series. Wonderful work! Truly a wizard; and what a gallery to spend the long Summer days in traversing with such company and amid such scenes—an answer gloriously satisfying the question "What shall I read?"

The members of the Bunch of Keys company did not linger long in the city after their arrival from San Francisco. George Lauri and his charming little wife, Marietta Nash, and Mrs. Fred McCloy (Ida Griffin) have gone to Flanders, L. I.; Eugene Canfield has gone to Asbury Park, to be the guest of Dudley McDow; Anna Guenther left immediately to visit her home in Cambridge, Mass., and Mrs. Frank Sanger has gone to Ocean Spray, to visit Mr. and Mrs. Nat. Goodwin for a few days, when she will return to her pretty little villa at Elberon for the remainder of the Summer.

Charles T. Vincent's new farcical comedy, "On the Quiet," was produced last Thursday night at Glen Cove, L. I. Judging from the favorable comments of the local press and the approbation expressed by the large and fashionable audience, the piece seems to have made an instantaneous success. Mr. Vincent has received several offers for "On the Quiet," but he has not yet disposed of it.

A letter from Boston says: "Frank Girard has been awarded a gold medal as heavyweight champion rower of City Point, South Boston. Frank Girard and Edward J. McElroy against G. Martin and M. Martin. The distance rowed was two miles. Time—19m. 25s. On the home stretch Girard was placed at a disadvantage through breaking an oar."

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